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ABSTRACT

This document is a chapter in "The Principles and Practice of Educational Management," which aims to provide a systematic and analytical introduction to the study of educational management. The structure of the book reflects the main substantive areas of educational leadership and management, and most of the major themes are covered in the volume's 19 chapters, of which this is one. This chapter looks at important questions for curriculum managers and examines the curriculum-management process. It discusses external control of the curriculum, accountability issues, and the tensions between these and the school's own values in curriculum decision-making. It argues that more attention needs to be given to the students' experience of the curriculum and what they bring to the learning process. It also suggests that schools look beyond the somewhat narrow and "technicist" approaches to curriculum management suggested by government agendas so that they can develop an approach informed by a more holistic view of pupils' current and future needs. Curriculum leadership's essential role is an integrative one and can be conceived of as a cyclical process that focuses on four tasks: planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating, and reviewing. Because external accountability varies widely among countries, it is important for curriculum leaders to maintain a clear focus on their schools' core values and priorities. Accordingly, leaders need to identify their schools' educational purposes and should not be preoccupied with external demands for measurable outputs. By taking into account their students' needs, curriculum leaders can help students become more responsible, helping them to develop the broader capabilities needed in the postmodern information age. (Contains 30 references.) (RJM)

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Managing the Curriculum for Student Learning.

Margaret Preedy

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Managing the Curriculum for Student Learning

Margaret Preedy

Introduction

This chapter looks first at a number of key questions that curriculum managers need to address.[1] It then goes on to examine the curriculum management process, involving four main stages. The following sections explore external control of the curriculum and accountability issues, and the tensions between these and the school's own ethos and values in curriculum decision-making. It is then argued that we need to give more attention to the students' experience of the curriculum, and what they bring to the learning process.[2] In conclusion, it is suggested that schools need to look beyond the somewhat narrow and technicist approaches to curriculum management suggested by government agendas and guidance, to develop an approach that is informed by a more holistic view of pupils' current and future needs in the information age.

Curriculum management is a complex task, and this chapter explores some of the main internal and external factors that contribute to this complexity, and the issues that arise for curriculum leaders. Curriculum management is concerned with addressing four key questions:

- Who? Students and teachers.
- What? The curriculum.
- Why? The school's values and aims.
- Where? The school as a learning environment.

Much discussion of curriculum management in the past has tended to focus on the 'what?' question, particularly in terms of the formal, planned curriculum, divided into subject areas as shown on the school timetable. It is argued here that curriculum leadership's essential role is an integrative one, linking the what with the who, why and where. In the light of the pressures on curriculum managers discussed later, this integrative function may not receive the attention it deserves. Given limitations of space, this chapter looks particularly at the what, why and who questions – the school as a learning environment is discussed elsewhere in this volume.

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We can identify three main dimensions or stages of the curriculum:

- the *intended* curriculum – what is planned
- the *offered* curriculum – what teachers teach
- the *received* curriculum – what students actually experience in the classroom.

It is a major curriculum leadership task to ensure that these three dimensions are in harmony – an integrative role again, and one that requires particular attention to the who question – how teachers and pupils interpret, enact and give their own meaning to what is planned. The focus in this chapter is on the pupil, rather than the teacher, aspect of this question.

Curriculum management processes

A useful way of conceptualising curriculum management is as a cyclical process, which includes four main stages or tasks: planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating, and reviewing or auditing (see Figure 10.1). While it is useful to distinguish these stages for the purpose of analysis, in practice they are closely interrelated and overlapping. As the arrows in Figure 10.1 suggest, the curriculum management cycle is a dynamic, or developmental process involving ongoing change directed at improving student learning.

Planning

Planning the curriculum takes place within the framework of the school's values and aims, and the priorities identified in the school improvement/strategic

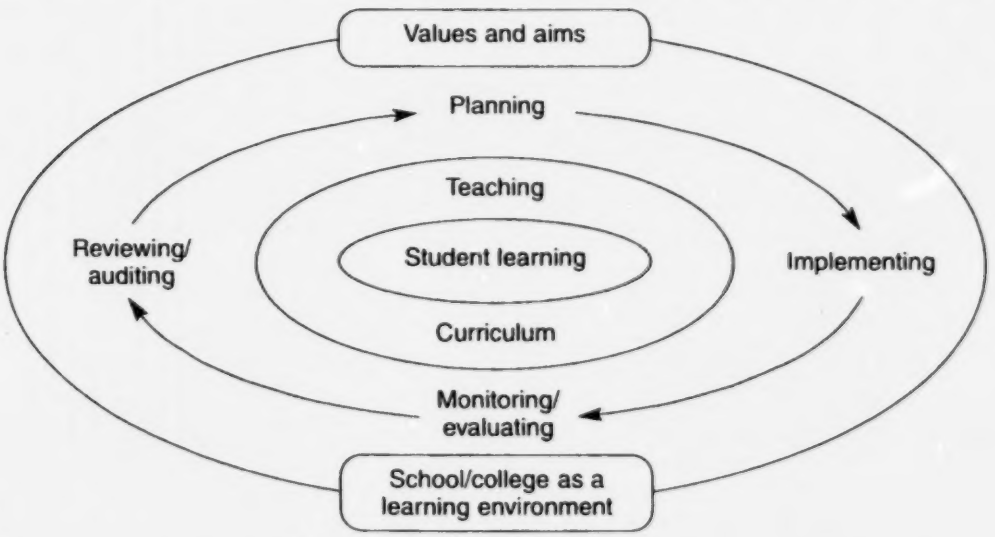

Figure 10.1 Managing the curriculum for student learning

Source: Preedy and Faulkner (1998:8)

plan, set within the context of local district expectations and national statutory requirements and guidelines. A key curriculum leadership task is to provide a clear overview and sense of direction, in ensuring that curriculum planning is related to the school's values and ensuring that there is coherence in the received curriculum as it is experienced by pupils. To enable this to take place a number of strategic issues need to be addressed:

- *breadth* – i.e. coverage of all areas of learning
- *balance* – that each area of learning is given appropriate attention
- *progression and continuity* – pupils' learning experiences should form a coherent and continuous process, within and between years, as they progress through the school, and also at school transfer stages
- *coherence* – within and between the various subjects and components of the curriculum provided
- *relevance* – meeting pupils' current and future needs
- *differentiation* – addressing the individual needs, interests and capabilities of each pupil.

These strategic issues raise a broad and complex agenda that needs to be addressed not only at whole-school level, but also within departments/sub-units and in the classroom. There may well be differences of view about how one operationalises these factors, and the appropriate emphases and priorities between them. There may be dilemmas, for example, between meeting the needs of individual students and those of the year group as a whole. There are also, of course, tensions between the various strategic issues identified above. Thus, for example, it might be difficult, particularly in the upper years of secondary schooling, to reconcile concerns about breadth and balance, while at the same time allowing students a degree of choice in selecting curricular options that they perceive as relevant to their needs.

Continuity and progression between phases of schooling – e.g. nursery, primary, middle and secondary in the UK – raise considerable management issues, since they require co-ordination with other schools. These issues are not made easier by competition between schools and a degree of parental choice – secondary schools, for example, especially in urban areas, may receive pupils from a very large number of primary or middle schools.

Strategic, long-term plans need to be linked to and supported by medium-term plans – and short-term ones i.e. weekly and daily plans – in collaboration with sub-unit leaders and classroom teachers, to ensure that whole-school intentions are translated into a detailed and coherent sequence of learning experiences. Plans represent what ought to happen. It is important for plans to provide clear means for turning 'ought' into 'is', by identifying the results of planning as 'what we want to witness in the classroom' (West, 1997).

A generic, whole-school agreed teaching and learning policy provides a useful means of developing clear links between whole-school policies and what happens in the classroom. Such policies should be linked to the school's overall aims and strategic plan, and include agreed guidance on appropriate teaching methods and strategies to promote various kinds of learning. This helps to promote consistency among teachers' approaches to the offered curriculum, which school improvement studies (see, for example, Hopkins et al., 1994) have shown to be beneficial to pupil learning.

Implementation

Rational planning models suggest that curriculum plans proceed in a logical and systematic way from policy to putting plans into action. However, effective planning only reduces the problems of translating the intended curriculum into practice. There is often a large implementation gap between the intentions of planners at national, local and whole-school levels, and the offered and received curriculum in the classroom. Much work on the management of curriculum change has shown that intended innovation often fails at the implementation stage, largely because we tend to focus on technical, rather than people-related aspects (Fullan, 1993; 2001; Louis and Miles, 1990). Because people have different interpretations and meanings of what a particular change entails for them, implementation should be seen as a gradual and evolutionary learning process, where shared meanings are developed among staff. Fullan (2001) argues that sustained change involves, in ascending order of difficulty, changes in materials, practices and beliefs. Thus for example it might be reasonably easy to persuade a teacher to use a new textbook, but changes in her/his teaching methods to complement the text, and convincing her/him that the text is valuable in meeting the learning needs of pupils, are much harder to achieve.

Some of the main issues in curriculum implementation can be summarised as follows:

- Innovations, externally and internally generated, do not come singly – implementation often involves juggling a range of competing change initiatives
- Planned changes are often unclear and ambiguous – thus for example deciding to move to a new exam board syllabus provides no guarantee that it will meet the needs of students better than the last one
- Top-down, externally initiated change may well be not understood or resisted by staff. Schools are 'loosely coupled' organisations with considerable scope for misunderstanding, adapting or simply ignoring planned changes at the various levels of decision making within the school. Particular difficulties may occur when teachers are critical of curricular changes introduced by national or state governments. An international

comparative study of schooling (Alexander, 2000) found that teachers in the USA and England were more inclined to contest externally initiated change than their counterparts in France, India and Russia, who accepted the externally prescribed curriculum as given and focused on how to implement it.

- Schools, unlike many industrial companies, do not have the time or resources to trial changes and iron out problems before they are put into practice. Changes, for example in the prescribed curriculum, have to be put into effect at the same time as teachers maintain existing areas of work, without disrupting continuity for pupils.
- External curriculum and assessment requirements are subject to frequent, ongoing adjustments, leading to 'moving goalposts' problems for schools in putting these changes into practice.
- A further issue is that unexpected and unplanned events are virtually inevitable – e.g. staff leaving. One study found that 'the vast majority of implementation problems are, in large measure, difficult to anticipate or avoid through advance planning' (Louis and Miles, 1990: 90).

Given these issues, it is important for curriculum managers to develop coping strategies for implementation, including regular discussion and review, expecting problems to occur and dealing with them as they arise, and developing support for implementation by means of staff project groups, co-ordinators for the implementation process, and advice from outside consultants – e.g. other schools with experience of the change(s) involved.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring is concerned with ensuring that plans are being put into practice. It is an ongoing and routine activity that requires systems for collecting and analysing information about the enactment of overall curriculum policy in sub-units and classrooms. Monitoring is sometimes seen somewhat negatively by teachers as checking for problems. It is important for curriculum leaders to establish routine monitoring as a shared and collaborative activity contributing to staff and school development, rather than something that is externally imposed on teachers.

Evaluation is concerned with making judgements about the value, worth or quality of curriculum provision or processes. Since evaluation involves judgements, which depend on values and beliefs about the purposes of education, which may differ among various stakeholders, it is likely to involve contention. It is therefore important for curriculum managers to discuss and agree the purpose and focus of any evaluation activity, and the criteria to be used for making judgements.

We can distinguish between two broad purposes for evaluation:

- evaluation for accountability and justification purposes – internal or external, – proving the quality of the school's work
- evaluation for improvement purposes – improving the quality of the school's activities.

While evaluation activities may include elements of both purposes, the two are likely to be in tension, especially if a strict 'rendering account' approach to accountability is involved. So, for example, if members of a departmental team are reviewing the teaching styles they use, with a view to developing teachers' repertoires of styles, members are likely to acknowledge areas of weakness and seek colleagues' advice on how they might improve and extend their range of styles. If, on the other hand, departmental members are explaining their teaching methods to an external inspector, they are likely to focus on providing a rationale and justification for their existing approaches, rather than acknowledging areas for development

Evaluation criteria are often expressed in the form of performance indicators (PIs). A PI is a statement or piece of information against which achievement in an activity can be assessed, and is only an indicator or signpost, rather than a direct measure. Quantitative PIs, for example pupil examination and test results and attendance figures, are relatively easy to collect and analyse, and may therefore be given undue attention, particularly in the light of external accountability demands discussed below. Qualitative indicators of school performance are equally, if not more important, but are much more difficult to agree, collect and interpret since they involve subjective values and judgements, and hence risk being neglected in favour of quantitative indicators. Qualitative factors include the quality of pupil–staff relationships, pupils' levels of satisfaction with their schooling (Gray, 1993), and areas of pupil achievement not readily measured by examination and tests, particularly their personal, social, moral and cultural development.

Review and audit

This phase of the curriculum management cycle involves a systematic process of review to clarify current policy and practice, involving information gathering and explanation, identifying strengths to build on and weaknesses to address, in order to identify priorities for the next phase of the cycle – planning, discussed earlier in this chapter. Review is closely linked to monitoring and evaluation, and is likely to draw on evidence and judgements from monitoring and evaluation activities. As with earlier stages of the curriculum management cycle, these are important issues for curriculum managers to address in the form of the purposes and focus of the review, methods and criteria to be used in identifying priorities and collecting information, stakeholder involvement, and the timescale and resources to be allocated. As with the

evaluation stage, there may be a risk of tending to focus on more easily gathered quantitative data and to neglect qualitative evidence.

A wide range of methods can be used for review or auditing – many local education authorities provide frameworks and guidelines, and there are various published review schemes and schedules (e.g. Drakeford, 1997). One useful approach is to conduct a SWOT or TOWS analysis, focusing on a particular area of provision – say a subject area. This provides a structured way of assessing the external threats and opportunities facing the subject area as a basis for considering how to maximise internal strengths and reduce weaknesses. External factors might include: recent research findings, evidence from other schools, national, local and community initiatives, funding, training and other sources of support, or lack of them, for the specific subject area.

It is also important for curriculum leaders to take account of and draw on published inspection criteria in planning and conducting reviews, in order to ensure that the school and its curriculum policies and practices are able to meet external inspection requirements. This raises issues of external control and accountability which are explored in the next section.

Control and accountability

An important consideration in school curriculum decision-making is the framework of control and accountability within which these decisions take place. In the UK context, five main levels can be identified: national, local education authorities (i.e. district level), whole-school, departmental and classroom levels. For most of the twentieth century, schools had a relatively high degree of autonomy over the content of the curriculum. The introduction of a national curriculum towards the end of the twentieth century considerably constrained the scope for schools to determine the content of the curriculum and also to some extent teaching approaches, and meant that curriculum managers were faced with the implementation issues discussed earlier in putting into place major externally initiated change.

The UK government also introduced a more rigorous school inspection regime against published criteria. This was coupled with a requirement for schools and LEAs to set regular targets for year-on-year improvements in pupil performance, and the publication of annual comparative data on test and examination results for schools and LEAs. Similar changes, introducing national curricula and more systematic quality control arrangements, took place in various other countries including Hong Kong and South Africa (Lumby, 2001).

Many countries, such as France, have had a centrally prescribed curriculum for a considerable period of time. The later years of the twentieth century saw a trend towards greater central control not just in the UK, but in other

countries which had hitherto had relatively decentralised education systems, such as Australia and New Zealand. It has been accompanied by the development of national inspection agencies and databases in order to monitor and provide national evidence on standards of school performance. This trend has also been evident in the USA, at state level, (though to a less marked extent than in the UK), with many state education departments producing curriculum statements or guidelines. The trend for governments to secure greater curricular uniformity and systematic ways of monitoring pupil performance has been driven by national concerns about educational standards in the light of economic needs for more highly educated workforces, to enable national economies to compete and hence survive in an increasingly globalised marketplace. Changes in curriculum control in the UK have been both more rapid and more profound than in many other countries. A comparative study of education in France, England, the USA, India and Russia noted that: 'England for long bracketed with the USA as an emblem of decentralisation and professional autonomy, became within the space of a decade the most centralised and ruthlessly policed of all our five systems' (Alexander, 2000: 532).

The externally prescribed curriculum and associated inspection arrangements give rise to a number of dilemmas for curriculum leaders, in balancing competing priorities – particularly between: external requirements and the school's own curriculum purposes and values; products in the form of test and examination results, and processes; quantitative and qualitative measures of performance and attainment; national curriculum subjects and broader aspects of the curriculum.

Given the expectation for schools in England and Wales to demonstrate year-on-year improvements in test and examination performance, there may also be tensions between meeting the needs of different groups of pupils, e.g. seeking to boost the examination/test performance of borderline students at the expense of attention given to higher and lower attaining pupils, raising equity issues. Moreover, schools and teachers may be 'colonised' (Jeffrey and Woods, 1998) by the discourse, approach and ideology of Ofsted[3] inspections, target-setting, and associated aspects of the UK governments' agenda to drive up standards of pupil performance. The system of inspection, analysis and publication of results, feeding into national policy-making exerts a powerful control over schools, determining not only the agenda for what schools are to do, but how it is conceptualised and debated.

It is, of course, important for schools to render account for their work, both to educational agencies responsible for monitoring their work – i.e. inspectors and, more broadly, to the public at large as taxpayers and parents. However, the hard-edged, managerial forms of accountability (Kogan, 1986) backed by sanctions, to which English schools are subject, focus on narrow areas of pupils' and schools' work, and tend to prioritise evaluation for justification rather than improvement purposes.

Aims, values and cultures

Given these external accountability pressures, it is important for curriculum leaders to maintain a clear focus on the school's own core values and priorities – the why question identified earlier. Unless these core school values are understood and agreed by its members, then its learning aims are unlikely to be achieved successfully. Individuals – teachers and other stakeholders – have deep-seated underlying values and assumptions about the nature and purposes of education, based on their experiences and professional socialisation. These assumptions may often be unacknowledged.

Most people would agree that a fundamental purpose for schools is to prepare students for life, but priorities and emphases will vary, based on differing values about meeting the needs of individual learners and the group, between social expectations and individual needs, and between the various forms of learning experience provided in schools. Thus, for example, in looking at the school's values for the individual student there are competing priorities – concern with the student's academic, social, moral and cultural development, preparation for adult life, the workplace, leisure, responsibilities as a parent and citizen, and decisions about the appropriate balance between each of these purposes. Different individuals and different stakeholder groups – teachers, students, parents, governors – are likely to balance these priorities in differing ways.

Thus, schools have multiple and often competing values and purposes for student learning. It is important to review these regularly as part of professional dialogue, so that tensions between competing priorities do not build up. It is also necessary to track school aims into practice, by ensuring that policies, schemes of work and practice in the classroom actually reflect these overall aims.

Peoples' underlying sets of values exert a fundamental influence on curriculum management processes. These sets of values or ideologies affect what are perceived as curriculum management issues and how they are tackled and resolved. We can identify four main curriculum ideologies (Ross, 2000; Skilbeck, 1976). Each of these suggests a particular approach to the structure and content of the curriculum.

1 *Classical humanism* – focuses on cultural heritage and the understanding and appreciation of the highest achievements in the arts, sciences and other areas of endeavour – based around the organisation of knowledge into subject areas, and content driven.
2 *Progressivism* – a developmental approach, which starts from the child's interests and needs, stressing the importance of giving children scope to explore their individual interests and talents – process driven.
3 *Reconstructionism* – conceives of education as a means of improving society, a force for planned social change, and the development of a more democratic and just society; social needs led and objectives driven.

4 *Instrumentalism* – education perceived as a means to an end (rather than an end in itself as in 1 above) – preparing children for adulthood – working life, citizenship, parenthood, in some forms stresses vocational relevance; objectives driven.

Any school's list of aims is likely to reflect parts of several of these ideal type ideologies, reflecting the demands of a pluralist society. Similarly national curricula will embrace elements of various ideologies – the English prescribed curriculum, for example, incorporates ideas from 1 and 4 above in particular.

While different curricular ideologies suggest various ways of conceptualising the curriculum, curriculum management processes are also influenced by organisational cultures and, more broadly, societal cultures. The planned, offered and received curricula reflect not just the norms and values of the school or college but also those of the broader society. The role of culture in educational leadership has been somewhat neglected (Cheng, 1995) but has begun to receive increasing attention (Dimmock and Walker, 2000). Clarke (1996) identifies three broad cultural approaches to the curriculum and teaching. In the European model, the curriculum is accepted as given, but teaching methods are negotiable, the teacher is seen as the controller of learning, and both group and individual teaching methods are used. In the North American model, the curriculum is seen as negotiable, the teacher acts as 'carer' rather than controller, and individual learning is of central importance. By contrast, in the non-Western cultural approach the curriculum is accepted as given, the teacher is an authority figure, and the group, rather than the individual, is important, with whole-class teaching methods predominating.

Students – the 'who?' question

In the light of the demands of the prescribed curriculum, it is important for curriculum leaders to maintain a clear focus on the 'who?' question – the student as learner – identified at the beginning of this chapter, and shown as the central circle in Figure 10.1. The requirements of a national curriculum, and associated testing, may tend to lead to a relative neglect of broader aspects of learners' needs at the expense of attention given to products in the form of measurable performance in prescribed subjects.

In maintaining a focus on the who question, I would argue that five main concerns need to be addressed. Each of these is outlined below.

Students as active participants

The student as an active participant in the learning process not a passive recipient. Learning is a creative process, in which the learner constructs her/his own understandings and meanings, making sense of new knowledge and experience

by relating them to prior experience and context. The English national curriculum tends to promote a transmission approach to learning, with the pupil as an empty vessel which the teacher, as 'expert', fills with appropriate knowledge, skills, etc. This is hardly conducive to helping students to become self-organising independent learners. Recognising pupils as active participants in learning, if this is to be taken seriously, would suggest the need to include pupil perspectives much more closely than is often the case in curriculum decision-making.

As various studies have shown (e.g. MacBeath, 1999; Rudduck et al., 1996), pupils can provide a valuable input to school decisions about learning and teaching. There are important ethical as well as practical reasons (Preedy, 2001) for involving pupils in the management and evaluation of their own learning. It is argued by Fielding (1997) that we need a 'transformative' approach to student participation, where their involvement is a routine and normal part of school life and they are seen as partners in the dialogue which informs the development of the school as a community. Equally, the more students are involved in the management cycle shown in Figure 10.1 with respect to their own learning, the more able they will be to take responsibility for their learning.

Broader capabilities and needs

The second concern is recognising the broader capabilities and needs of pupils, which extend far beyond the largely cognitive and knowledge-based areas that are covered in the prescribed curriculum. Gardner's (1993) concept of multiple intelligences suggests the importance of transcending our rather narrow and restrictive view of pupils abilities and attainments. Drawing on Gardner's work, Handy (1997) suggests a range of intelligences or talents. The first three – factual, analytic and numerate – receive considerable attention in tests and examinations, and in schooling generally. Some of the others receive less attention – linguistic, spatial, athletic, intuitive, emotional, practical, interpersonal and musical. This range of intelligences indicates a need to broaden the curriculum beyond the subjects that form the focus of the English prescribed curriculum. It is interesting in this context to look at the Norwegian government's curricular aims below, which suggest a broader range of educational aspirations, addressing some of the areas of development identified by Handy:

- a person searching for meaning
- a creative person
- a working person
- an enlightened person
- a co-operating person
- an environmentally sensitive person (cited by Dalin and Rust, 1996: 156).

The capabilities identified by Handy are important life skills that people increasingly need for adult life. Employers no longer provide a job for life, and employees need to be flexible, adaptable, prepared to continually update their skills, and to manage their own career paths, what Handy calls 'portfolio' people. Given this context, development of interpersonal and social skills becomes an important priority. Technological developments also serve to highlight the importance of these broader skills and capabilities. In our information age, new knowledge is continually being created, and hence all our knowledge has a provisional status; it is subject to uncertainty and reformulation. Students can access an enormous range of ever-changing knowledge and information via the Internet. In this situation, they arguably need not a body of received knowledge, but skills in finding, analysing and evaluating information, so that they can construct their own knowledge. The evaluative dimension is important in helping students to take a critical stance towards the seemingly limitless information that they now have access to electronically, and the ability to be selective and discriminating in constructing their own frameworks for making sense of the world. This involves what Brookfield (1987) calls 'critical thinking', coming 'to our judgements, choices and decisions for ourselves, instead of letting others do this on our behalf' (ibid.: x).

Affective factors

The third area for attention by curriculum leaders is what students bring to the learning process in terms of what might be broadly called affective factors. Three main aspects of the affective dimension of pupil learning are outlined below: preferred learning styles, attitudes and motivation.

1 Young people, like adults have different *learning styles* – usually one or two dominant styles with which they are most comfortable. It is important for curriculum managers and staff to review pupil learning styles and to consider the implications for how pupils are grouped, and how far teaching methods and pupil activities address the range of preferred learning styles. This raises the issue of the extent to which teachers are responsive to pupil learning styles and the ways in which they seek to develop pupils' facilities in using different approaches for various learning activities.
2 *Students' attitudes* towards school have a major influence on their own attainment and that of other pupils. It is an important curriculum management task to ensure that the school seeks to foster positive student attitudes, to try and ensure that as many students as possible feel themselves to be valued members of the school community.

   There is considerable evidence from the UK, USA and elsewhere (see, for example, Elliott, 1998; Keys and Fernandes, 1993) that many pupils, especially in secondary schools, are disaffected and disengaged from schooling,

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leading to truancy and disruptive behaviour. It is therefore important for curriculum managers to develop strategies to engage pupils and to plan and offer learning experiences that pupils perceive as relevant to their own needs. Such strategies include:

(a) taking account of student motivation issues in planning the curriculum
(b) promoting high expectations about work and behaviour, with regular feedback, and praise both for good work and effort
(c) helping students to develop high self-esteem through opportunities to experience success in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities
(d) encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their work and progress
(e) clear communications with students about expectations and responsibilities for work and student conduct.

3 *Student motivation* is an important and complex component in effective learning. Curriculum managers need to explore how to help pupils to become more highly motivated and engaged in their work. A distinction is often made between two sources of motivation. *Intrinsic* motivation arises from interest in the activity itself. *Extrinsic* motivation arises where factors external to the activity are important to the learner. Three main areas of extrinsic motivation are:

(a) *instrumental* – where motivation is engendered by rewards and sanctions external to the task
(b) *social motivation* – where the activity is valued in the context of pleasing other people, e.g. peer group, teachers
(c) *achievement motivation* – where students wish to perform well to achieve success in tests or examinations or to compete with others.

Reinforcement of extrinsic motivational factors – e.g. by means of encouragement, praise, achievement awards – can help to boost intrinsic motivation.

A useful way of taking account of motivational issues is to gather evidence from students and use the findings in the planned and offered curriculum. One such study (Williams, 1997), asked pupils about what made them want to learn and what factors in the school generally and in lessons helped and hindered their learning. The study found that some pupils perceived that staff–pupil communication was poor. A major demotivating factor for pupils was that interactions with teachers focused largely on negative aspects of pupil work and behaviour, e.g. lateness, missing homework, rather than positive aspects. The school then instituted strategies to improve staff–pupil communications and to encourage teachers to adopt a more positive focus in their interactions with pupils.

Social dimensions of learning

The fourth main pupil related concern for curriculum leaders to take into account relates to the *social dimensions* of learning. The prescribed

curriculum and associated testing arrangements give prominence to individual learning and attainment. However, from a social constructivist perspective, learning is a form of social participation, and emerges from social interaction. Knowledge is dynamic; we construct and reconstruct our knowledge and understanding by discussing and negotiating insights and ideas with other members of a social culture to build shared new meanings. As Bruner suggests 'most learning in most settings is a communal activity . . . It is not just that the child must make his knowledge his [her] own, but that [s]he must make it his [her] own in a community of those who share his [her] sense of belonging to a culture' (Bruner, 1986: 127). Moreover, much that pupils will do in adult life, both in the workplace and elsewhere, will be done in collaboration with other people.

Recognising that much learning is situated in social interaction, and acknowledging pupils' social as well as individual needs, would suggest that it is important for schools to foster the interpersonal and social capabilities discussed earlier – abilities to work collaboratively and constructively as members of a team, to plan, implement and achieve tasks with others, to negotiate and debate, to be flexible and open minded, to handle conflict, and so on.

Holistic view of learning

The fifth and final pupil-related concern for curriculum leaders, embracing those discussed above, is taking a *holistic view of learning*, what Young (1998) calls 'connectivity'. Much of the prescribed curriculum, and the organisation of schooling generally, is segmented into separate components – discrete knowledge areas and subjects, key stages for assessment, different education sectors – primary, middle, secondary, further/higher education, school learning and lifelong learning – with wide disjunctures between these components. This inevitably leads to a lack of cohesion in the received curriculum as experienced by pupils, and fails to provide them with a clear framework to help them make sense of the world, where things are connected, rather than separate.

In developing a curriculum that is appropriate for current and future individual and societal needs, Young (1998) argues that we need to think beyond the confines of a subject-based prescribed curriculum to debate our educational purposes and the sort of society we wish to see in the future. There will be multiple and competing perspectives, both about purposes and concepts of a future society. In terms of the curriculum ideologies discussed earlier, Young is arguing for greater weight to be given to ideas from the reconstructionist and progressive traditions. He suggests that a curriculum for the future needs to emphasise the links or connections, between the currently segmented components of school, non-school and lifelong learning, giving pupils an integrated and holistic view of learning and life. From this point of view, a connective curriculum strategy involves identifying the educational purposes of the school, recognising learning as a social process, and linking the

purposes and activities of both learners and teachers with how they relate to developments in the wider society. Such an approach not only shapes learners' purposes in the light of the societal context, but is also shaped by and responsive to learners' perceived needs and purposes.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at a number of fundamental questions that curriculum leaders need to address, and the issues involved in the curriculum management process. Later sections explored the tensions between external curricular controls and requirements and the school's own purposes and values. It has been argued that, notwithstanding the demands of the prescribed curriculum, it is essential for schools to maintain and develop their own clear curricular agendas, based on addressing the why and who questions discussed earlier. This entails, first, identifying our educational purposes and striving to ensure that these are reflected in the planned, offered and received curricula. Second, it entails not being preoccupied with external demands for measurable outputs, but instead, maintaining a holistic focus on pupils' current and future needs and involving them in progressively taking responsibility for their own learning, and helping them to go beyond the ability to ingest facts and received knowledge, to develop the broader capabilities that are necessary for survival in our postmodern information age.

Notes

1 This chapter uses the terms 'curriculum leaders' and 'curriculum managers' interchangeably, to avoid the more lengthy 'curriculum leaders and managers', to denote those with responsibility for curriculum decision-making at whole school/college level. It is argued that their roles integrate both leadership, i.e. a strategic overview, and management tasks.
2 The terms 'pupils' and 'students' are used interchangeably, again in the interests of brevity, and 'schools' rather than 'schools and colleges'. The discussion here includes both these groups of learners and types of educational organisation.
3 Ofsted – the Office for Standards in Education – inspects and reports on educational standards in English state-maintained schools and provision for 16–19 year olds in colleges.

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